



STOCKPORT  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Diversity & Equality Policy

કોર્પોરેશનની વિવિધતા અને સમાનતાને લગતી નીતિ

કર્પોરેટ ડાઈવર્સિટી ઓ ઈક્વિટી પોલિસી

السياسة المشتركة للتنوع و المساواة

سياستهای مشارکت تنوعات و مساوات

કાર્પોરેટ ડાઈવર્સિટી ઓ ઈક્વિટી પોલિસી

團體多元化及平等政策

Stockport Council

March 2006

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If you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format, for example, Braille, large print or audio tape please contact:

The Diversity & Equality Team  
Chief Executive's Services  
Town Hall (Victoria House)  
Stockport Council  
SK1 3XE  
Tel: 0161 474 3161  
Fax: 0161 474 3009  
Email: [diversity&equality@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:diversity&equality@stockport.gov.uk)

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## Foreword

We are proud of Stockport's diverse population. Councillors and officers share a commitment to provide the community leadership and public services needed to improve the quality of life for people in the borough. Promoting equality of opportunity and demonstrating the value we place on our diverse community and workforce is one of our most important expressions of this commitment.

This document includes our latest Corporate Diversity & Equality Policy. The Policy sets out our vision and objectives for promoting diversity and equality which will be a key priority for us in coming years. It also includes a number of Policy Statements which outline our commitment to challenging discrimination and promoting equality for specific groups of people.

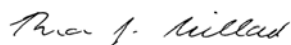
We have also produced a Comprehensive Equality Scheme which sets out in detail how we will go about achieving this vision and meeting our legal duties.

The Policy and Scheme will ensure a clear and consistent approach to promoting diversity and equality across the Council. Crucially, this approach requires the full involvement of the people of Stockport and all our partners.

We are committed to achieving Level 5 of The Equality Standard for Local Government. The Standard is an important measure of progress towards our Diversity & Equality Vision which states that:

**“We want to be recognised and known as an inclusive organisation that represents, serves and employs people as equals. We will also value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances.”**

The Council has an increasing number of legal obligations to promote equal opportunities for employees, citizens and customers. However, our vision extends beyond these legal duties into supporting the ongoing development of Stockport as a vibrant borough with a diverse social, cultural and economic life.



Brian J Milliard , Leader of the Council



Martin Candler, Executive Member (Customer Focus)



John Schultz, Chief Executive

# Part 1

## Corporate Diversity & Equality Policy

### 1.1 Our Vision

**“We want to be recognised and known as an inclusive organisation that represents, serves and employs people as equals. We will also value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances.”**

### 1.2 Our Objectives

- 1.2.1 To champion equality of opportunity and to challenge all forms of discrimination in the borough. In this way we will contribute to Stockport being a place where people want to live, work and visit;
- 1.2.2 To provide the services that meet the individual needs of our customers and communities;
- 1.2.3 To have a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve and to promote the benefits of having a diverse workforce;
- 1.2.4 As a major purchaser and commissioner of services to use our spending power to influence other organisations to promote equality of opportunity; and
- 1.2.5 To further involve the public, our partners and employees in scrutinising these objectives, related targets and initiatives.

### 1.3 The Policy Context

- 1.3.1 The need and aspirations of people in the borough set the context for this policy. However, the law and good practice elsewhere does influence the way we will pursue the above objectives.
- 1.3.2 Stockport Partnership is made up of all the borough's major public, private, voluntary and community organisations. It has developed a vision for the Borough which consists of following five challenges:
  - Putting People First
  - Promoting a Strong and Responsible Economy
  - Creating Safe and Healthy Communities
  - Protecting and promoting our environment and heritage
  - Developing Learning Communities

**Putting People First** is particularly relevant to this Diversity & Equality Policy as it seeks to make Stockport a borough which:

*“promotes equality of opportunity, values the positive aspects of our diversity and where people are neither excluded nor disabled by the attitudes, barriers or prejudices of wider society”*

The Council's Corporate Plan, *Cleaner, Greener, Safer, Stronger* sets out our contribution to meeting the five challenges. Under the Plan's priority to create *Safer, Stronger Communities* we have stated our commitment to promoting community cohesion, diversity and equality. This commitment is further explained in this policy.

1.3.3 Current and approaching legislation also influence this policy and includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970;
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 & 1986;
- Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000);
- Children's Act 1989;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended in 2005);
- Asylum & Immigration Act 1996;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Employment Relations Act 1999;
- Sexual Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001;
- Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002;
- Employment Equality Regulations (Religion or Belief) 2003;
- Employment Equality Regulations (Sexual Orientation) 2003;
- Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- Equal Opportunities and Carers Act 2004;
- Work & Families Bill 2005 (due for implementation from April 2007);
- Equality Act 2006; and
- Employment Equality Regulations (Age) 2006.

1.3.4 We are committed to meeting our obligations under these laws, but we regard them as minimum requirements. Our policy goes beyond them to include some groups of people for whom the law does not currently ensure the equal provision of goods and services. These groups include: older and younger people; bisexual people; lesbians and gay men; and ex-offenders. We will update our policy as and when necessary to meet new laws and their codes of practice.

## 1.4 Institutional discrimination

- 1.4.1 It is our policy not to discriminate unlawfully or unfairly against anybody. Sometimes we have to choose between people, for instance in selecting candidates for jobs or deciding on people's eligibility for services. In these cases, it is our policy to discriminate lawfully and fairly, only taking into account relevant factors, and explaining our decisions.
- 1.4.2 Unfortunately, unlawful and unfair discrimination is still common in society. It is based on stereotypes and false assumptions, and the belief that some groups of people have more or fewer rights than others. We oppose unfair discrimination as an abuse of advantage and power.
- 1.4.3 We also know that institutions as well as individuals can unlawfully and unfairly discriminate. We define institutional discrimination as:
- The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of who they are;
  - Processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping;
  - Not just actions taken by a person or organisation, but also actions **not** taken. This might include neglect, or services provided which do not meet the needs of different groups of people.
- 1.4.4 Institutional discrimination can be unwitting through lack of thought, knowledge or planning. As such, it can exist regardless of the good intentions of an organisation's individual employees or decision-makers. This is a challenge which all organisations, including Stockport Council, need to face honestly and openly. It is only by being open that manifestations of institutional discrimination can be identified, properly investigated and effectively tackled.

## 1.5 General Policy on Diversity & Equality

- 1.5.1 We positively value the diversity of tradition, culture and belief within our local communities. We aim to provide and promote services to which all residents enjoy entitlement irrespective of race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities, offending past, social class or age.
- 1.5.2 We are determined to eradicate all forms of discrimination on these grounds. We are therefore committed to:

- Promoting and encouraging understanding of the principle of diversity and equality amongst our employees, customers, residents and partners;
- Identifying and removing any practice which may result in direct or indirect discrimination;
- Providing equal access to resources and services for all local residents;
- Ensuring that our personnel and employment policies and procedures provide equality of opportunity across all services;
- Tackling forms of institutional discrimination in our organisation when they are identified;
- Encouraging all sections of the community to engage actively in our democratic and consultative processes;
- Ongoing consultation with customers, employees and communities at risk of discrimination;
- Fully complying with all relevant legislation;
- Striving to achieve and maintain nationally validated equality and diversity standards and good practice found in other organisations; and
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of our policies and making changes where necessary.

1.5.3 We expect our employees and elected members to commit themselves to challenging and combating discrimination in all its forms and will ensure guidance is developed to give effect to this principle.

1.5.4 The more detailed statements in Part 2 of this document support this general policy.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The success of this policy in bringing about change requires the commitment of everyone involved with the organisation – elected members, senior officers, all employees, trade unions, partners and contractors. Without such commitment it will not be possible to create an environment in which people can reach their potential, free from the barriers of discrimination.

## **1.6 Our role as a Community Leader**

We recognise that we have the opportunity to use our role as a community leader to help promote diversity and equality throughout the borough. We will use our legal powers (Local Government Act 2000) to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the borough to engage the Stockport Partnership in achieving our Diversity & Equality Vision.

There are three main ways in which we intend to use our community leadership role:

### **1.6.1 Promoting Diversity**

We will:

- Promote the diversity of Stockport's communities as a real asset for the borough. For example, Stockport has a highly skilled older population, many of whom will welcome the forthcoming Employment Regulations on Age. These regulations will make it illegal to discriminate in employment and vocational training on the grounds of age;
- Lead by example – where possible provide funding and support to organisations combating discrimination or bringing communities together;
- Ensure that the Stockport Partnership is fully representative of and accessible to all our communities; and
- Promote positive, diverse images of residents, visitors and communities. We will do this in our official documents and the work we undertake with our partners.

### **1.6.2 Promoting equality of opportunity through working with other organisations**

We will:

- Work in partnership with other agencies, particular those in the Stockport Partnership, to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted through both good employment practices, and in the delivery of services;
- Encourage the development and sharing of good practice in the promotion of equal opportunity;
- Ensure that our procurement strategy and procedures require our contractors to meet the objectives of this policy and our related legal duties; and

- Support the activities of voluntary and community groups in the borough, particularly where they act as advocates for people experiencing discrimination.

### 1.6.3 Building Community Cohesion

We will:

- Work with different communities to reduce mistrust, combat ignorance and encourage people to work together in finding solutions to local problems;
- Meet our legal duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote good relations between people of different racial groups; and
- Support people standing up to champion the causes of local communities. We aim to support the development of self-confident voices who can articulate community needs directly and who share our commitment to bringing people together.

## 1.7 Our Role as an Employer

We are committed to ensuring that we provide equal opportunities in employment to our existing employees and anyone who applies for a job with us. This makes good business sense, it is in line with good practice elsewhere and we are legally required to do so. As such, we have adopted the following statement:

**“We reaffirm our opposition to unfair discrimination in recruitment, employment or pay. We will ensure that the selection, training and promotion of employees is based solely on the criteria of merit and ability. No job applicant, employee or ex employee will receive less favourable treatment<sup>1</sup> on the grounds of: race; religion; gender; marital status; sexual orientation; disability; offending past<sup>2</sup>; caring responsibilities; status as a refugee; social class; or age.”**

The principle behind this statement is intended to cover discrimination in employment occurring on any other unjustified grounds.

Implementing equal opportunities for employees is a continuing process that we keep under constant review. The process involves devising codes of practice; establishing procedures; promoting good practice within the organisation and setting goals to ensure continuing progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Except where there is a legally recognised Genuine Occupational Requirement

<sup>2</sup> Except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults.

### **1.7.1 What is expected of our employees?**

We are clear that our employees have responsibilities for ensuring that they promote equality of opportunity in the workplace and the services they provide. In particular, our employees must not:

- Themselves discriminate, for example as supervisors or persons responsible for selection decisions;
- Encourage other employees to unlawfully discriminate, for example, a refusal to recruit employees from particular backgrounds;
- Harass, abuse, intimidate or victimise other employees and members of the public;

In addition:

- Each employee will be responsible for his or her own behaviour being acceptable within the terms of the Policy; and
- Complaints by employees of unfair and discriminatory behaviour, harassment or bullying will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly.

### **1.7.2 Recruitment and Selection**

We will:

- Carry out fair recruitment procedures as set out in our recruitment and selection policy and guidance notes. We will ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. We will ensure that only objective, job related criteria are used;
- Provide equal opportunities training in our recruitment and selection courses for all officers and elected members involved in recruitment. Untrained employees or elected members will not be permitted to take part in any interview process;
- Provide recruitment complaints procedures, which can be used by job applicants or any employee who feels they have been treated unfairly;
- Ensure that details of job vacancies are widely circulated. Advertisements and job descriptions have clear and accurate information to enable applicants to assess their suitability for the post. Job specifications only include criteria that are necessary and justifiable for the job;
- Use positive action initiatives and messages in our advertising to encourage people from under represented groups to apply for jobs. This will help to

ensure that employees from these groups become proportionally represented across all grades and salary levels; and

- Consider positive action training to equip groups that are under-represented in our workforce with essential job skills.

### **1.7.3 Consultation with Employees**

We will:

- Consult with employees on this Policy through existing officer groups, trade unions and consultation forums for under represented groups of employees.

### **1.7.4 Employment Monitoring**

We will:

- Provide quarterly employment monitoring reports to the Corporate Management Team so that regular performance against this policy can be tracked; and
- Publish an annual [Diversity in Employment Report](#), which shows our progress towards achieving equality of opportunity and diversity in employment. In particular, the report provides detailed monitoring information required by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

## **1.8 Our role as a Service Provider**

It is our aim to provide services to which all residents are entitled regardless of race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, offending past, caring responsibilities, social class or age.

We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of the borough's residents and customers by:

### **1.8.1 Assessing Diverse Needs**

- When planning and reviewing services we will research customers' different needs to ensure that our services are able to reasonably cater for them. All our service areas complete Equality Impact Assessments to ensure new or revised policies are examined for their impact on different groups of people;
- Consulting customers is a key part of researching customer's needs. When we consult we will ensure minority and disadvantaged groups are included;
- When different services needs are identified we will respond in a positive way as it provides us with an opportunity to improve access to our services. We see this positive approach to difference as key to good Customer Care;

### **1.8.2 Meeting Diverse Needs**

We will:

- Take all reasonable, legal steps to ensure that our services are accessible to all customers. For example, this may involve improving physical access to buildings, access to information and communication channels, employees or elected members;

### **1.8.3 Measuring and Reporting Performance**

- Services identified as having particular relevance to promoting equality will be monitored. This will enable us to get a clear picture of which groups of people are accessing them or are satisfied or dissatisfied with them. This information will be used to ensure that different groups of people get equal access, outcomes and satisfaction from our services;
- Without exception, when monitoring services for equal access, outcomes and satisfaction customer information will be collected using the following categories: gender; age; ethnicity and disability. Some services may in addition find it useful to collect information about a customer's sexuality, religion or postcode;
- We will use this information, in an anonymous form, to develop improvement actions and targets across the Council, at the Directorate level and within service areas (or business units). These actions and targets will be included in annual business plans; and
- A Diversity & Equalities Report will be published annually in July.

### **1.8.4 Resources to Meet Diverse Needs**

We will:

- Make resources available to meet the diversity and equality actions and targets in annual business plans. This is essential if real change is to be brought about;
- Our Diversity & Equality Team will advise and guide managers on how best to progress diversity and equality improvements in their service areas; and
- Training and development programmes will also be made available for employees so that they are able to identify and respond to the diverse needs of customers. Our Organisational and Development Learning Team is responsible for these programmes. The competency models we use for employee development include skills closely associated with the promotion of diversity and equality.

## **1.9 Implementing and monitoring this Policy**

- 1.9.1 For implementation details see our Diversity & Equality Plan in Part 3 of this document
- 1.9.2 We will review the Policy & Plan in 2008 to ensure that we are achieving this policy's vision and objectives.

## **1.10 Leadership and Responsibility for this Policy**

It is crucial if we are to achieve our Diversity & Equality Vision that we have strong leadership both at the political and officer level. Responsibilities for the policy are held by:

### **1.10.1 The Council's Executive**

The Diversity & Equality Policy & Plan is classed as a 'Key Decision' document and as such is approved at the Council's Executive Meeting.

The Executive Member holding the Customer Focus portfolio (which includes diversity & equality issues) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy & Plan.

Internal scrutiny of this Policy & Plan is provided by our **Corporate Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee**. The **Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion Cross Party Working Group** also provides advice to the Executive Meeting on a wide range of policies relating to diversity and equality.

### **1.10.2 Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)**

The CLT is made up of the Corporate Directors from each Directorate. It is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the Council's main policies and strategies, including this Policy and Plan.

### **1.10.3 Corporate Diversity Steering Group**

This senior officer group gives a strategic steer for diversity and equality issues across the Council. As Chair of the Corporate Diversity Steering Group the Assistant Chief Executive is the Council's lead officer on diversity and equality issues. The Executive Member (Customer Focus) also regularly attends this group.

Cross Council Officer working groups focus on specific diversity and equality priorities. For example, the Race Equality Working Group advises on and monitors the progress the Council is making against the objectives of its Race Equality Scheme.

#### **1.10.4 Directorate Diversity Steering Groups**

Each Directorate in the Council has a Diversity Steering Group made up of representatives from each of their service areas (also known as Business Units). These Groups advise service areas on how to meet the requirements of The Equality Standard for Local Government and share good practice. They also provide quarterly progress reports to the Corporate Diversity Steering Group.

#### **1.10.5 Heads of Service & Managers**

Are responsible for ensuring that their service and employment practices meet the objectives and actions set out in this Policy and Plan.

#### **1.10.6 Employees**

Are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of this Policy are met in their work and relationships with customers, colleagues and partners.

### **1.11 Breaches of this Policy**

There will undoubtedly be occasions when we will need to take corrective action and reinforce our expectations of employees. We will take disciplinary action within agreed procedures where this Diversity & Equality Policy is being ignored, abused or breached. It is a condition of service that employees adhere to this policy and failure to do so will provide grounds for disciplinary action.

### **1.12 Compliments, Comments or Complaints**

We have clear procedures that enable service users, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel that they have been treated unfairly.

We will make our [Compliments, Comments or Complaints Procedure](#) available to all our customers on request. It is also available in alternative languages and formats.

The Council will provide assistance and advice to any of its customers on how to use the procedure. We consider the procedure an important tool in helping us to improve our service to customers.

The Compliments, Comments or Complaints form and supporting information can be found on our Website at:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/content/councildemoc/council/contacts/complaintsaboutservices/?a=5441>

Employees who feel that they have been treated unfairly can use our [Grievance Procedure](#) available on the Council's Intranet site.

## Part 2 Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

This section provides several statements in support of our general policy on diversity and equality. It further outlines our commitment to challenging discrimination and promoting diversity in relation to specific groups of people.

### 2.1 Gender

2.1.1 Many women continue to experience discrimination in a number of ways throughout their lives. For example, unlike men, in most families women are still expected to undertake the majority of caring responsibilities. Many continue to work in low paid and low status jobs. Women in full time employment still receive 17% less pay than men doing the same or equivalent jobs. Women in part time employment receive 38% less than men doing the same or equivalent jobs<sup>3</sup>. They are still under-represented in organisations taking the major decisions affecting people's lives. Some face domestic violence in the form of physical, emotional, economic and sexual abuse in the family, as well as violence in public.

2.1.2 We recognise that men can also experience discrimination in society and the workplace, when, for example, they attempt to undertake careers associated with women or change careers to undertake caring roles within their families.

2.1.3 We recognise that there is also discrimination against transsexual and transgender people.

2.1.4 We will:

- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men;
- Take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men;
- Offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training, and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- Provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

### 2.2 Age

2.2.1 We recognise that society and service providers unfairly discriminate against people because of their age. For example, by 2010, it is estimated that 25% of the UK's working age population will be over the

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<sup>3</sup> 'Then and Now: 30 Years after the Sex Discrimination Act', Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005.

age of 50 with only 17% being between the ages of 16 to 24. Unless age discrimination in employment and training is tackled a large human resource will continue to be wasted. This has significant implications for Stockport Council as the age profile of Stockport's population is higher than the national average.

2.2.2 We will:

- Ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- Ensure that people of working age are given equal access to Council employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

2.2.3 We recognise the benefits of having a diversity of ages in our workforce, such as:

- Retaining key employees' skills and experience;
- Maintaining lower recruitment costs;
- Introducing a wide variety of life experiences to the workplace which benefit service planning and delivery;
- Maintaining motivation and loyalty

## 2.3 Race

2.3.1 Racism is unfair discrimination on the grounds of people's skin colour, culture or ethnic origin. Racism must be confronted in order to reduce its damaging effects. Racist assumptions create barriers, which can hinder democratic representation, services and employment opportunities. We are determined to challenge racism wherever it occurs.

2.3.2 We also recognise that the seriousness of racist incidents demand swift and sensitive responses. We have adopted the Lawrence Inquiry definition that:

*“a racist incident is any incident perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”*

2.3.3 Our Hate Incident Reporting Procedures sets out how we will deal with such incidents reported to us by [customers](#), [the public](#) or [employees](#).

## 2.4 Ex Offenders

2.4.1 We recognise that ex offenders can experience discrimination in society. We are committed to preventing such discrimination against our employees or customers regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

2.4.2 We acknowledge that employment is an important part of ex offenders' rehabilitation. For ex offenders who find employment the chances of re-offending are reduced. As such, there are strong social and business arguments for the Council to provide equal access to employment for ex offenders. We aim to do this in a responsible way that maintains our duty of care both to our employees and customers.

## **2.5 Disability**

2.5.1 We conform to the following Disability Discrimination Act's definition of disability as:

"A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

2.5.2 We also follow a social model of disability that uses the following definition:

"There are barriers in society that prevent disabled people from achieving their full potential, hindering their personal development opportunities and limiting access to a full role in society".

2.5.3 We will:

- Provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities.
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- Seek to continue improving access to information by ensuring the availability of: loop systems; Braille facilities; information in alternative formats and sign language interpretation.

## **2.6 Sexual Orientation**

2.6.1 We recognise that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals may face discrimination and hostility through intolerance and ignorance. As a result, they may experience harassment, and some live in fear of being "outed". We welcome the repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, which has been a barrier placing unnecessary restrictions on the Council's ability to work with lesbian and gay men. We will:

- Ensure that our services take account of the needs of lesbians and gay men; and
- Promote positive images of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

## **2.7 Carers**

2.7.1 By carers we mean people who look after relatives or friends who need support because of their age, disabilities or illness. The 2001 Census showed that there are 5.2 million people providing informal care in England and Wales, one in ten of the population.

2.7.2 Carers are a disadvantaged group, and likely to be excluded from mainstream services, for a variety of reasons. For example, carers will give up work to care for a family member, friend or partner, and as well as losing income, will also incur additional costs. The so-called costs of caring can be over and above those of 'ordinary' families, and can cause substantial financial hardship.

2.7.3 We will:

- Ensure that all carers know that they are entitled to an assessment of their needs;
- Actively consider a carer's outside interests (work, study or leisure) when carrying out an assessment;
- Promote better joint working between councils and the health service to ensure support for carers is delivered in a coherent manner; and
- Continue to adopt flexible employment practices to assist employees who are carers.

## **2.8 Belief & Religion**

2.8.1 People hold many and varied religious beliefs. Some people have strong beliefs or convictions that are not religious. We apply the following definition of belief:

“Belief extends to religious beliefs and philosophical convictions similar to religious belief which deserve society's respect”

2.8.2 The above definition does not extend to political beliefs.

2.8.3 We will:

- Ensure that employees' beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible. We will not discriminate against people in their request for leave or the use of flexible hours in order to fulfil these observances;
- Ensure that goods and services are not arranged so that they exclude groups of people due to their beliefs. If this is the case alternative arrangements will be made where possible;

- Respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others; and
- Actively encourage and promote neighbourliness and understanding between different faith groups in Stockport.

## **2.9 Refugees & Asylum Seekers**

- 2.9.1 We are committed to preventing discrimination against asylum seekers and refugees by ensuring equality of opportunity in the provision of our services and, in the case of refugees, in employment and access to social housing.
- 2.9.2 In fulfilling our community leadership role we are committed to the successful integration of all asylum seekers and refugees. We will promote and facilitate community cohesion with our wide range of statutory and voluntary partners.
- 2.9.3 We recognise that asylum seekers and refugees living in Stockport can make a positive contribution to its skills base, economy and cultural diversity.